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EXAMINER

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 8, 11-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Cheminal et al (5,523,500).

Cheminal '500 discloses a process for fluorination of halogenated hydrocarbons by gas phase catalysis (note column 1, lines 11-15).

As disclosed in "Fluorination Examples", HF and 1-chloro-2,2,2-trifluoroethane (F133a) is used as the reactants (note column 10, lines 61-67).

The catalyst is a catalyst based on nickel and chromium oxides (note claim 1 and Examples 1-5, 9, 11).

In the instant claims, the only positive limitation for the catalyst is the Ni/Cr of between 0.02 and 0.4:1

In Examples 13-15, the HF/F133a ratio is from 3.8 to 4.2, the contacting time is from 3.8 to 4.1 seconds, the temperature is 350°C, the pressure is at atmospheric pressure, the reaction is carried in the absence of oxygen (note column 11, lines 21-24 and Table 1). Catalysts A and D have Ni/Cr atomic ratio of 0.34 and 0.07, respectively.

In examples 16-17, the HF/F133a ratio is 5.1, the contacting time is from 19.6 to 19.7 seconds, the temperature is 350°C, the pressure is at 1.5 MPa, the reaction is carried in the presence of oxygen (note column 12, lines 15-20 and Table 2). Catalyst e has a Ni/Cr atomic ratio of 0.37.

In Examples 18-20, the HF/F133a ratio is from 3.9 to 4.0, the contacting time is from 4.0 to 4.8 seconds, the temperature is 350°C, the pressure is at atmospheric pressure, the reaction is carried in the absence of oxygen (note column 12, lines 53-56 and Table 3). The catalyst can be regenerated by treatment under air at 300°C for 24 hours (note column 12, lines 57-61).

Cheminal '500 discloses a list of compounds that may be used as starting halogenated hydrocarbons which include $\text{CCl}_2=\text{CCl}_2$ (which is considered the same as "perchloroethylene) (note column 5, lines 7-19).

Cheminal '500 discloses that the fluorination reaction temperature depends on the reaction and the desired reaction products. Thus, for partial replacement of chlorine atoms by fluorine, the reaction is carried out at temperatures of between 50-350°C; the replacement of all the chlorine atoms may require temperatures of between 300-500°C (note column 5, lines 34-40).

The contact time also depends on the reaction and the desired products. In general it is between 3 and 100 seconds, preferably less than 30 seconds (note column 5, lines 41-45).

The HF/organic compounds molar ratio may vary between 1/1 to 20/1 (note column 5, lines 46-50) and the operating pressure is preferably between 1 and 20 bars absolute (0.1 to 2 MPa) (note column 5, lines 51-52).

The process of Cheminal '500 anticipates the claimed process.

For the limitations (a)-(c) after "prepared by" in the instant claims 1 and 25 and the limitation in claim 18 are considered as "product-by-process" limitations.

Alternatively, if there is any difference due to the product-by-process limitations for making the catalyst used in the claimed process, however, when the examiner has found a substantially similar product as in the applied prior art, the burden of proof is shifted to applicant to establish that their product is patentably distinct and not the examiner to show the same process of making. *In re Brown*, 173 USPQ 685 and *In re Fessmann*, 180 USPQ 324. It should be noted that the BET specific surface area and the pore volume of the chromium oxide are for the starting chromium oxide, not for the catalyst final product.

Claims 8, 11-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cheminal '500.

Cheminal '500 discloses a process as stated above.

For other halogenated hydrocarbon beside the exemplified 1-chloro-2,2,2-trifluoroethane (F133a) (which is considered the same as the claimed "1-chloro-2,2,2-trifluoroethane"), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use other reactants in the process of Cheminal '500 as long as such reactants are halogenated hydrocarbons that can be fluorinated by HF.

For other values for fluorination temperature, contacting time, etc., it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to choose the instantly claimed ranges through process optimization, since it has been held that there the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. See *In re Boesch*, 205 USPQ 215.

Applicant's arguments filed December 3, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that Cheminal '500 relates to mass catalyst based on chromium and nickel oxides obtained from a process including fluid colloidal solution (sol) deposition, which are not the same structure as claimed by Applicants.

Applicants have not provided sufficient evidence to show that the structure of the catalyst as disclosed in Cheminal '500 is different that that of the catalyst used in Applicants' claimed process. Moreover, Applicants' claims are to a process for catalytic fluorination of saturated or olefinic halogenated hydrocarbons using a bulk catalyst having a Ni/Cr atomic ratio between 0.02 and 0.4:1, thus, as long as the catalyst as

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disclosed in Cheminal '500 has the same Ni/Cr atomic ratio, it would sufficiently promote the fluorination of saturated or olefinic halogenated hydrocarbons, regardless of whether or not it has the same structure as the catalyst of the claimed invention.

Applicants argue that Cheminal '500 does not disclose or render obvious the use a catalyst prepared by using a chromium oxide having a BET specific surface area of greater than $150 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ and a pore volume of greater than 0.15 ml/g .

It is noted that the surface area and pore volume as stated above are for the starting chromium oxide, not for the final bulk catalyst. Since the catalyst in the claimed invention was formed by impregnating an amorphous chromium III oxide with a solution of nickel compound, the nickel compound would at least take up some of the pore volume and thereby reducing both the surface area and the pore volume of the starting chromium oxide and the resulting surface area and pore volume of the final catalyst in the claimed invention might be the same as the values disclosed in Cheminal '500. Again, these limitations are considered as "product-by-process" limitations, Applicants have not provided any comparative examples to show that the catalyst used in the claimed invention would provide a better result for a catalytic fluorination as compared to when the catalyst as disclosed in Cheminal '500 was used.

Applicants argue that Example 10 shows that the catalyst showed improved fluorination (>70%) and the Example 11 showed poor the fluorination capabilities (>50%) of catalysts having low starting pore volume and low specific surface area. It is noted that both Examples 10 and 11 in Applicants' specification are comparative examples, the catalyst D used in comparative Example 10 does not contain Ni and the

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catalyst D used in comparative Example 11 has low starting BET surface area and low pore volume. Applicants' argument is fully considered but they are not persuasive because the claimed invention was not compared to the closest prior art, which is Cheminal '500 and the final catalyst used in Cheminal '500 has high surface area which fairly teaches that the starting material must inherently have as high or higher surface area. Section 716.02(b) of the MPEP states that "evidence of unexpected properties may be in the form of a direct or indirect comparison of the claimed invention with the closest prior art which is commensurate in scope with the claims. See *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980) and MPEP §716.02(d) - § 716.02(e). See *In re Blondel*, 499 F.2d 1311, 1317, 182 USPQ 294, 298 (CCPA 1974) and *In re Fouche*, 439 F.2d 1237, 1241-42, 169 USPQ 429, 433 (CCPA 1971) for examples of cases where indirect comparative testing was found sufficient to rebut a prima facie case of obviousness. For the comparative Example 11, even though it shows lower overall degree of conversion and low selectivity for F125, however, there is no clear evidence to show that such results are directly caused by the low pore volume of the starting chromium oxide, not because of the low starting surface area. Furthermore, even if there was evidence to show that the performance of the catalyst in the claimed process was directly related to the pore volume of the *starting* material, such evidence still cannot be used to compare with the pore volume in the *final* catalyst of Cheminal '500.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ngoc-Yen M. Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-1356. The examiner is currently on a Part time schedule schedule.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman can be reached on (571) 272-1358. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Ngoc-Yen M. Nguyen/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1793

nmn
August 17, 2009